



NEWS RELEASE

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Maize Welcomes New Families Through Special USDA Housing Program

Maize, KS - USDA Rural Development State Director Chuck Banks today assisted Wichita-based Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services, Inc. in welcoming seven new families to Maize. The event recognized the families who worked together to build their own homes through USDA's *Mutual Self-Help Housing Program*. Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services has been a participant in USDA Rural Development's *Mutual Self-Help Housing Program* since 1997, helping to provide affordable housing opportunities for Sedgwick County residents.

During the event, State Director Banks remarked, "Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services is an outstanding faith-based organization that excels in assisting minority and low-income homeownership applicants in rural Kansas. Over the past nine years Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services has assisted in the construction of nearly one hundred *Mutual Self-Help Housing Program* homes, with more planned for 2007. President Bush has stressed the goal of expanding homeownership in our Nation, and has stated that the faith-based community is helping to achieve that goal. Homeownership is an important first step for personal economic prosperity and community development.

Esther Prince, of Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services stated, "We appreciate USDA Rural Development's support, both through their technical assistance grant program for Mennonite Housing, as well as home financing loan funds which allowed our families to build and purchase their own homes. Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services looks forward to a long and continued successful partnership with the Agency."

State Director Banks further commented during the event, "Supporting critically needed economic development opportunities for rural Kansas is directly tied to increasing the availability of affordable housing. USDA Rural Development in Kansas helps over 7,000 Kansans annually to secure homeownership or provides apartment living through Agency funded developments located around the State. Fiscal Year 2006 was another record-setting year for USDA Rural Development in Kansas, with over \$257 million in federal funds provided for the citizens of Kansas. These funds have been used to finance homes, businesses and community needs throughout the State."

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs that support increasing economic opportunities and enhance the quality of life of rural Americans. As a venture capital entity, USDA Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure in rural America. For additional information regarding all USDA Rural Development programs, individuals may contact the Agency's Newton office at 316-283-0370 or log onto the Agency's website at: www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks

USDA Rural Development - Committed to the future of rural communities.

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